

What to Say in Storytime This Week...



Begin with a brief explanation of Emergent Literacy. Start with a statement like this: “Young children develop six very important skills before they learn to read and write. In upcoming storytimes, I’ll be demonstrating a variety of ways you can help your child to develop these skills, so you can help them to become ready to read when they get to school. If you would like more information about this, I’ll be happy to answer your questions after storytime.”

Remember, it’s not necessary, or even desirable, to highlight more than one skill during a storytime session.



PRINT MOTIVATION means thinking that books and reading are pleasant.

“Make sure reading together is always a pleasant experience. If your child isn’t having a good time, try a different book or just try again later.”

“Did you know that we have some great non-fiction books designed especially for preschoolers? If your child loves dinosaurs, trains, or animals ask me and I’ll help you find the perfect book for her!”

“When you visit the library, make sure that you let your child choose his own books, even from an early age. If your child needs a little guidance, find a range of books that reflect his interests, and then let him choose from your selection.”



PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS is being able to hear and play with the smaller parts that make up words.

“In songs, each syllable usually gets its own beat. Clapping along with the syllables in a song can help your child to develop an ear for the smaller sounds in words, which makes it easier when it’s time to learn to read.”

VOCABULARY is knowing the names of things.

“Books give children the opportunity to learn new words they wouldn’t normally hear. Just make sure to tell them what the new words mean.”

“You’ve probably noticed that your kids love to read the same stories over and over again. While it can make you feel slightly crazy as a parent, kids who listen to the same book several times are building their vocabulary, which will make a big difference when they are learning to read.”

“Don’t worry about finding the ‘perfect book’ to read to your child. The important thing is that you DO read together each day. When you read together, your child will encounter new words they might not hear in everyday life. Having a good vocabulary will make it easier for them to learn to read down the road.”

“When you’re reading with your child be sure to stop and recite fun phrases in books. This will help them to learn new words.”



LETTER KNOWLEDGE means knowing that letters are different from each other, that each letter has a name, and that specific sounds go with specific letters.

“Alphabet books are a fun way to become familiar with the different letters in the alphabet.” Put some alphabet books on display at your storytime, and read one if you have a favorite. If you label your alphabet books, show the parents what the label looks like.

“Children begin the formal process of learning to read by becoming familiar with the letters of the alphabet. You can help by talking with your child about the letters that are most interesting to her—like the first letter of her name. If your child’s name begins with ‘T,’ help your child find the letter T in books, on signs, food boxes, mail and on other objects.”



PRINT AWARENESS means knowing how a book works and being able to recognize print.

“When you read a story to your child, run your finger along under the print. This helps children learn how print works, and shows them that you are reading the words and not the pictures.”

“Have you ever helped your child create a book of their own? It’s a fun way to help your child understand more about how books work and a great project for a cold and rainy afternoon!”

“Books aren’t the only place to find words! Help your child recognize words and letters everywhere you go—at the park, at home, even in the car. Point out traffic signs, look at billboards, at cereal boxes, and license plates.”

Pretend to be confused as you begin reading a story while holding the book upside down and backwards. Ask the children to help you figure out what’s wrong. They will be delighted to help you hold and read the book correctly. After reinforcing your very savvy audience, explain to caregivers: “Helping your child to understand how books work is a great way to help them become ready to read. When kids are comfortable with books they can concentrate on learning to read.”



NARRATIVE SKILLS means being able to tell stories and describe things and events.

“Children love to have favorite stories read to them over and over again. When you are reading one of these stories, stop occasionally and ask your child what is going to happen next. This helps children to understand how a story works.”

“When you get home have your child draw a picture about something that happened in the book and then tell you about it. This will help with reading comprehension down the road.”

What is Emergent Literacy?

Whether you call it emergent literacy, early literacy, or pre-literacy, it's one of the most exciting new trends in library services for families. What is it, exactly? Emergent literacy is what a child needs to know before he or she can learn to read. Research shows that there are six pre-reading skills that must be acquired before a child can learn to read. These skills are literally the building blocks for future success in reading.

They are:

- **PRINT MOTIVATION** – thinking that books and reading are fun
- **VOCABULARY** – knowing the names of things
- **PRINT AWARENESS** – recognizing print and understanding how books work
- **LETTER KNOWLEDGE** – understanding that each letter has its own name and sounds
- **NARRATIVE SKILLS** – being able to tell stories and describe things
- **PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS**– being able to recognize and play with the smaller sounds that make up words

Children begin to learn these skills at birth, if they are lucky enough to have parents or caregivers who speak and read to them often. Unfortunately, many children aren't so lucky. The good news is that we, as librarians, can make a big difference!

Adding emergent literacy to your storytime is easy and rewarding. It doesn't need to be a big deal, and it only takes a few seconds. Giving your audience a quick "word to the wise" is all it takes to make your storytime an emergent literacy storytime. The good news is that the small changes you've made will help parents and caregivers to make big steps toward helping their children to become ready to read.



Utah Kids Ready to Read!

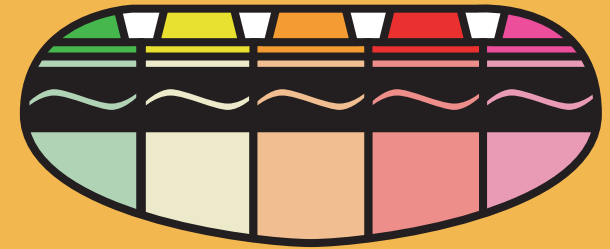
Utah Kids Ready To Read! is a new state-level initiative that has been organized to inform and train public librarians and library staff about emergent literacy philosophy and techniques so that they, in turn, can then teach parents and other caregivers the skills to help their children learn to read.

The vision of Utah Kids! is for all parents and caregivers to nurture their children's early literacy skills, and for all children to develop as independent, lifelong readers. Emergent literacy training gives parents the confidence and tools to take an active role in being their child's first teacher to take the first steps towards reading. Literate children—kids who know how to read and love it—are the future of our public libraries, and of our communities. Utah Kids Ready To Read! is source of early literacy information, and of training resources for library professionals and friends throughout Utah.

The Utah Kids Ready to Read! trainer task force is comprised of children's library and literacy specialists from Salt Lake County Library Services, Provo City Library, and the Salt Lake City Public Library, along with administrative support from the Utah State Library.

If you would like to learn more, please visit the Utah Kids Ready to Read! website at

http://library.utah.gov/utah_kids/index.htm.



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